

# Study illustrates Facebook's growth as campaign news source

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In this May 16, 2012, file photo, the Facebook logo is displayed on an iPad in Philadelphia. Facebook was the top non-television source for election news cited by supporters of both candidates, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center. The social media site's import as a driver of political news has been underscored by the lingering controversy of people using it to spread false news stories. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, File)

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton voters had different media diets, but

a study finds common ground in Facebook as an important news source—even if their individual feeds bore little resemblance to each other's.

Facebook was the top non-television source for election [news](#) cited by supporters of both candidates, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center. The social media site's import as a driver of political news has been underscored by the lingering controversy of people using it to spread false news stories.

Eight percent of Clinton voters and 7 percent of Trump voters named Facebook as their main source of election news, Pew said.

"That was a pretty important finding," said Jeffrey Gottfried, senior researcher at the Washington-based think tank.

Facebook doesn't produce news; members share stories from a multitude of sources and their news feeds tend to reflect the politics of their Facebook friends.

With a multitude of web sites serving fake news stories with no basis in fact, Facebook announced last month that it would partner with outside fact-checkers to flag particularly egregious examples that are spread on the social media site.

While other digital brands like Breitbart News, BuzzFeed, the Drudge Report and the Huffington Post received plenty of publicity during the campaign, they received little attention from the voters surveyed by Pew.

Forty percent of Trump voters cited Fox News Channel as their main source of campaign news, the winner by a huge margin. The second most-cited news source by Trump supporters was CNN, with 8 percent.

"This is very much on par with previous research we have done," Gottfried said. Pew didn't ask similar questions after past campaigns, but in a 2014 survey, 47 percent of conservatives cited Fox as their top news source, he said.

The finding shows Fox's continued strength with conservative voters, and likely explains why the network has taken no change in direction following the ouster last summer of its founder and top executive, Roger Ailes, following sexual harassment allegations.

CNN was the top news source named by Clinton supporters, with 18 percent, Pew said. Although that was twice as much as any other news source, Clinton voters were much more likely to have more diverse media diets. MSNBC, with 9 percent, was second among Clinton voters. That network was named by only 1 percent of Trump voters.

National Public Radio was another news source held in high esteem by Clinton voters but by few Trump supporters, the survey said.

The New York Times was the most-cited newspaper source of news, with 3 percent of all voters saying it was their top news source, Pew said.

Pew found little difference in media choices among Republicans who supported different candidates during the primary, yet real differences between Democratic supporters of either Clinton or Bernie Sanders. For instance, 4 percent of Sanders voters cited the online forum Reddit as a main [news source](#), with few Clinton voters saying the same.

Pew surveyed 4,183 adults who are members of its American Trends Panel between Nov. 29 and Dec. 12. The margin of error is 2.7 percent among all [voters](#).

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